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Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2011/12	$50,526,100
Expenditure for 2011/12	$48,243,300
Unencumbered balance for 2011/12	$2,282,800
Appropriation for 2012/13	$45,992,000
Projected expenditure for 2012/13[a]	$45,992,000
Estimated unencumbered balance for 2012/13[a]	$0
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2013/14	$47,443,800
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2013/14	$47,356,500

[a] Estimates as at 11 February 2013.

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I. Introduction

1. **The recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraph 22 below would entail reductions of $87,300 to the proposed budget for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (see A/67/705). The Committee has made observations and recommendations, where appropriate, in the paragraphs below.**

2. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 18 March 2013. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Committee in its consideration of the financing of UNDOF are listed at the end of the present report. The detailed comments and recommendations of the Committee on the findings of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations and on cross-cutting issues related to United Nations peacekeeping operations can be found in its related reports (see A/67/782 and A/67/780, respectively).

II. Budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012

3. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 65/302, appropriated an amount of $50,526,100 gross ($48,999,400 net) for the maintenance of UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. Total expenditures for the period amounted to $48,243,300 gross ($46,887,900 net), which is $2,282,800 gross ($2,111,500 net) lower than the amount appropriated by the Assembly, corresponding to a budget implementation rate of 95.5 per cent. As shown in section III.A of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/589), the underexpenditure is the net result of reduced requirements of $2,572,100 under military personnel costs and of $697,700 under operational costs, offset, in part, by overexpenditure of $987,000 under civilian personnel (see paras. 4-7 below). A summary of the activities undertaken by UNDOF during the period to implement its mandate is contained in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report of the Secretary-General, and the extent to which actual progress was made against the expected accomplishments for the period is contained in section II.E of the same report.

4. The Advisory Committee notes that the overexpenditure of $987,000 under civilian personnel costs is equivalent to 8.5 per cent of the apportionment. Under the requirements for international staff, the Committee was informed that the overexpenditure of $1,161,200, or 14.4 per cent of the apportionment, is owing to additional requirements for common staff costs ($1,265,000) to provide for the evacuation of dependants of staff as a result of the security situation in the Force area, as well as for additional requirements for danger pay ($68,800), which is partially offset by reduced requirements for staff assessment ($166,200), resulting from the revision of international salary scales effective 1 January 2012, and for salaries ($6,400).

5. Under national staff, the reduction in the requirement of $204,300, or 5.7 per cent of the apportionment, is attributable mainly to the difference in the actual average exchange rate of 56.9 Syrian pounds to the United States dollar, compared

with the budgeted exchange rate of 46.3 pounds to the dollar, which is partially offset by additional requirements for overtime (see, para. 24).

6. Under general temporary assistance, the additional requirement of $30,100, or 73.4 per cent of the apportionment, was owing to the temporary replacement of staff on maternity and medical leave and for additional assistance for operational tasks that were necessitated by the security situation, including in the areas of facilities management and transport.

7. The comments of the Advisory Committee on the information in the performance report on individual objects of expenditure can be found, where relevant, in the discussion of the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 in the paragraphs below.

III. Financial position and information on performance for the current period

8. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 6 February 2013, a total of $1,739,744,000 had been assessed on Member States with respect to UNDOF since its inception. As at 6 February 2013, payments received amounted to $1,705,005,000, leaving an outstanding balance of $34,739,000. As at 4 February 2013, the Force had cash resources of $15,600,000; after allowing for a three-month operating cash reserve of $7,643,000, the remaining balance amounted to $7,957,000.

9. The Advisory Committee was further informed that, as at 31 December 2012, payments totalling $16,661,000 had been made in the year 2012 for troop costs up to 31 October 2012, and that an amount of $3,365,788 was owed for the period from 1 November 2012 to 31 January 2013. As at 31 December 2012, payments totalling $966,000 had been made in the year 2012 up to September 2012 for contingent-owned equipment, and the balance owed amounted to $221,000. In respect of death and disability compensation, no unliquidated obligations or claims remained outstanding.

10. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the incumbency of UNDOF military and civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, as at 31 January 2013, as follows:

Category	*Authorized*[a]	*Encumbered*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
Military contingents	1 047	1 013	3.2
International staff	46	41	10.9
National staff	110	102	7.3

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for the period.

11. The Advisory Committee was also provided with information on current and projected expenditures for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 with reasons for variance. As at 31 January 2013, current expenditures amounted to $25,014,900 gross ($24,265,100 net) against an appropriation of $45,992,000 gross ($44,929,300 net). The Committee was informed that the Force projects full utilization of the approved appropriation of $45,992,000 in the 2012/13 financial period. Reduced

requirements for military personnel are projected to result in an unencumbered balance of $230,800, or 1 per cent of the apportionment of $23,380,800. Under civilian personnel, increased requirements for personnel are projected to result in an overexpenditure of $3,940,000, or 38.4 per cent of the apportionment of $10,260,500. Under operational costs, reduced requirements would result in an unencumbered balance of $3,709,200, or 30 per cent of the apportionment of $12,350,700. The Committee was further informed, upon enquiry, that the increased requirement for civilian personnel would be met through the reprioritization of resources for operational costs, in consultation with counterparts in the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ensure that the implementation of the mandate is not at risk. The Committee was informed that if there are resource requirements that cannot be met within the approved 2012/13 budget, appropriate actions will be taken, in a timely manner, by the Secretary-General to obtain funding through the legislative bodies.

12. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, in order for the Force to remain fully capable of implementing the mandate, it had taken steps in the current financial period to increase the tempo of patrols, harden its positions and improve mobility though the replacement of obsolete armoured personnel carriers and the acquisition of 31 armoured vehicles from the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria.

13. **The Advisory Committee notes that the projected reductions in the budgetary resources available for operational costs in the current period, coupled with the envisaged unbudgeted outlays to meet the evolving operational challenges facing UNDOF described in paragraph 12 above, may pose a risk to the ability of the Force to carry out its mandate effectively. On the other hand, the Committee is concerned that the magnitude of the reductions projected under operational costs in the current period may be indicative of overbudgeting in UNDOF. The Committee therefore suggests that, in advance of the General Assembly's consideration of the proposed UNDOF budget, the Secretary-General reassess the planned utilization of the approved budgetary resources in the 2012/13 financial period with a view to ensuring that any additional requirements are accommodated without an adverse impact on mandate implementation, and to provide updated information on expenditure in the current period to the General Assembly when it considers the proposed budget for UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.**

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014

A. Mandate and planned results

14. The mandate of UNDOF was established by the Security Council in its resolution 350 (1974). By its resolution 2084 (2012) of 19 December 2012, the Security Council decided to renew the mandate of UNDOF until 30 June 2013. In that connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the Mission will continue to fulfil its mandate of maintaining the ceasefire between the Israeli and Syrian forces and supervising their disengagement in the area of separation.

15. Planning assumptions and mission support initiatives for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 are described in paragraphs 7 to 15 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/705). It is indicated in the report that no changes to the Force structure and deployment are projected in the 2013/14 period, and that UNDOF will continue to enhance the Force mobility, observation and communications equipment and infrastructure in order to maintain the required operational and security capacity and will continue discussions with troop-contributing countries with the aim of enhancing the operational capabilities of the Force. However, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations recently deployed a mission capability study team to UNDOF, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2084 (2012), which may result in a recommendation to adjust the military component of the Force. **The Committee trusts that any additional budgetary requirements resulting from the military capability study of UNDOF will be submitted to the General Assembly in a timely manner.**

16. In paragraph 11 of his report on the proposed budget for UNDOF (A/67/705), the Secretary-General provides information on the implementation of a mission support plan. According to the Secretary-General, during the 2012/13 financial period, the Force intends to implement the fourth phase of the plan, which is to optimize inventory through fewer replacements and to bring into service more technologically advanced equipment and facilities to enhance the capabilities of the Force, resulting in cost savings and an overall 10 per cent reduction in non-expendable inventory. The Advisory Committee notes that this enhanced support is to be achieved within existing budgetary resources and through the utilization of opportunities for cooperation among the Middle East peacekeeping missions.

B. Resource requirements

17. The proposed budget for UNDOF for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 amounts to $47,443,800 gross ($46,161,000 net), representing an increase of $1,451,800, or 3.2 per cent, in gross terms, compared to the appropriation of $45,992,000 gross for the 2012/13 financial period. The proposed budget reflects an increase in the provisions for civilian personnel of $3,390,500, partially offset by decreases in the provisions for military personnel of $667,200 and for operational costs of $1,271,500. The financial resource requirements are provided in section II of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget (A/67/705). The UNDOF budget provides for the deployment of 1,047 military personnel; 48 international staff, inclusive of 2 staff against general temporary assistance positions; and 110 national staff in the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

18. An analysis of variances is provided in section III of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget.

1. Military personnel

Category	*Approved 2012/13*	*Proposed 2013/14*
Military contingent personnel	1 047	1 047

19. The requested resources for military personnel for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 amount to $22,713,600, a decrease of $667,200, or 2.9 per cent, compared to the apportionment for the 2012/13 financial period. The decrease under military personnel is attributable mainly to (a) the exclusion, under troop reimbursement costs, of the provision for the one-time supplemental payment to troop-contributing countries in the 2012/13 financial period authorized under General Assembly resolution 66/264 ($694,200), and (b) lower provisions of travel on emplacement, rotation and repatriation for contingent personnel based on recent expenditures ($176,900), which is partly offset by additional requirements for rations ($203,900), owing to the implementation of a new rations contract in January 2013.

20. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the resources proposed for military personnel**:

2. Civilian personnel

Category	*Approved 2012/13*[a]	*Proposed 2013/14*[a]
Posts		
International staff	46	46
National staff	110	110
General temporary assistance		
International staff	–	2

[a] Represents the highest authorized/proposed strength.

21. The estimated requirement for civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 amounts to $13,651,000, reflecting an increase of $3,390,500, or 33 per cent, in comparison with the apportionment for the 2012/13 period.

22. Under international staff, the proposed resources amount to $8,719,400, reflecting an increase of $1,165,700, or 15.4 per cent, compared to the apportionment for the 2012/13 financial period, which is attributable to the provision for danger pay, which has been approved for the UNDOF area of operations since July 2012, and the revision of the estimate for common staff costs. It is indicated in paragraph 30 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/705) that the staffing costs reflect the application of a vacancy factor of 10 per cent for international staff in the 2013/14 financial period. The Advisory Committee recalls that in its previous report it had recommended a revision to the vacancy factor for the current period from the proposed level of 10 per cent to 10.9 per cent in the 2012/13 financial period (A/66/718/Add.10, para. 29), which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/276. The Committee was informed that while the vacancy rate among international posts in UNDOF had averaged 9.1 per cent for the period from 1 July to 30 November 2012, the actual vacancy rate was 10.9 per cent in the month of December 2012. **The Committee recommends that the vacancy factor applied for international staff in UNDOF be increased to 10.9 per cent and that the related budgetary requirement for the 2013/14 financial period should be reduced accordingly.**

23. Under national staff, the proposed resources amount to $4,420,400, reflecting an increase of $1,754,600, or 65.8 per cent, compared to the apportionment for the

2012/13 financial period, which is attributable to the denomination of the national salary scales in United States dollars effective 1 August 2012 and to the provision for danger pay, which has been approved for the UNDOF area of operations since July 2012 (see A/67/705, para. 41).

24. Regarding the denomination of local salary scales in the United States dollar, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the application of special measures is included in the established salary survey methodology to address particular situations of acute economic distress and long-term economic or social instability. Specific situations include rapid inflation following significant devaluation of local currency, civil unrest or warfare and labour markets with extremely limited employer activity. The Committee was further informed that the application of special measures is not intended to fully insulate locally recruited staff from the prevailing economic and social conditions in the duty station, but to provide partial stability in extreme situations.

25. The Advisory Committee was informed that, in accordance with the approved salary survey methodology, a review of special measures had been conducted by the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) in January and February 2012. For national staff, in January 2012, a non-pensionable bonus of 10 per cent was approved, and in February 2012, a 40 per cent non-pensionable bonus was approved, as the security situation continued to deteriorate. The Committee was informed that the purpose of the non-pensionable bonus was to provide partial stability to the compensation of national staff members, during which time the United Nations operational exchange rate between the Syrian pound and the United States dollar deteriorated by 40 per cent between November 2011 (49.3 Syrian pounds) and February 2012 (69.25 Syrian pounds). The special measure of the 40 per cent non-pensionable bonus was subsequently extended until it was replaced in August 2012 with the local salary scale denominated in United States dollars.

26. The Advisory Committee was also informed that in the case of national staff in UNDOF, as well as those in United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the Syrian Arab Republic, OHRM approved the denomination of salary scales in United States dollars as a special measure to mitigate the impact of deteriorating economic conditions resulting from the ongoing civil unrest. The Committee notes that the local salary scale, while issued with effect from August 2012, was based rather on the official rate of exchange of 49.3 Syrian pounds per United States dollar in effect for the month of November 2011. Upon further enquiry, the Committee was informed that the salary scale was approved using the rate of exchange applicable to the month of November 2011 because the conduct of an interim local salary survey had been due in November 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic, but could be not undertaken, owing to the prevailing security situation.

27. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to carefully monitor developments in the UNDOF mission area and to revert to the payment of salaries to national staff in the appropriate national currency as soon as economic conditions permit.**

Recommendation on posts

Reassignments/redeployments

28. It is indicated in paragraph 14 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/705) that, based on a review of its staffing structure, the Force proposes adjustments in the Office of the Chief of Mission Support, and in the Finance, Supply and Transport Sections in the Mission Support Division. It is proposed to reassign a post of Vehicle Technician (Field Service) to the Supply Section as a Supply/Fuel Assistant post to manage the Fuel Unit and to ensure the effective and efficient support of five contingent units, taking measures to eliminate waste and prevent environmental damage and fraud (see A/67/705, para. 26).

29. It is also proposed to consolidate the finance and budget functions into a new Finance and Budget Section, consisting of 12 posts from the Finance Section and two posts, comprising one Budget Officer post at the P-3 level and one Budget Assistant (national General Service), to be redeployed from the Office of the Chief of Mission Support, which is intended to improve the Force capacity in providing financial management and related advisory services in connection with the implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the Umoja enterprise system (see A/67/705, para. 27). The Committee comments further on the issue of the consolidation of finance and budget functions in its report on cross-cutting issues in peacekeeping operations (A/67/780).

Temporary positions

30. In the Office of the Force Commander, one new temporary position at the P-5 level is proposed for Senior Adviser to the Force Commander to provide substantive advice and analysis on issues and developments related to the implementation of the mandate of the Force and engagement with parties to the disengagement agreement, and to support the Force Commander in meeting the increased demand for reporting requirements to Headquarters in connection with the ongoing security situation (see A/67/705, para. 20). In addition, one new temporary position at the P-3 level is proposed for Security Information Analyst, who would be responsible for the management of security information, including the collection, the collation, the analysis and the dissemination of data, which will be used as a decision-making and planning tool by the Designated Officer and the Force management team to enhance the security and safety of UNDOF personnel, assets and operations (see A/67/705, para. 21). The Committee was informed that the Force is required to submit substantive reports to the Security Council every three months, in accordance with resolution 2084 (2012), which was adopted by the Council on 19 December 2012, rather than every six months, as was the case previously.

31. The Advisory Committee was informed that the functions of the position of the Senior Adviser (P-5) have been performed by a staff member on temporary duty assignment since November 2012 and that the functions of the position of Security Information Analyst (P-3) have been performed by an individual consultant since October 2012. The Committee, upon further enquiry, was informed that the requirement for the two positions may extend beyond the expanded reporting schedule agreed by the Council, and that the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic may remain complex for some time.

32. **The Advisory Committee notes that the functions of the two temporary positions in the Office of the Force Commander are linked to the security situation in the mission area and to the additional reporting requirement imposed by the Security Council in its resolution 2084 (2012). The Committee has no objection to the establishment of the two temporary positions.**

33. **Taking into account paragraphs 22 and 32 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the staffing changes and the resources proposed by the Secretary-General for civilian personnel in UNDOF.**

3. Operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Approved 2012/13	*Proposed 2013/14*	*Variance*
Operational costs	12 350.7	11 079.2	(1 271.5)

34. The estimated requirements for operational costs in the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 amount to $11,079,200, representing a decrease of $1,271,500, or 10.3 per cent, compared to the apportionment for the 2012/13 financial period. The decreases are mainly owing to reductions in the requirements for (a) official travel ($47,100, or 10.6 per cent); (b) ground transportation ($1,159,900, or 40.7 per cent), owing to the extended utilization of the existing vehicle fleet, resulting in the exclusion of provisions for the acquisition of vehicles and related workshop equipment for the 2013/14 period, and lower diesel consumption resulting from projected efficiency gains; (c) medical ($73,500, or 15.2 per cent), attributable to the availability of existing stock for medical supplies and lower costs for the acquisition of replacement and additional equipment; and (d) special equipment ($132,300, or 96.1 per cent), owing mainly to the exclusion of provisions for the acquisition of observation, mine detection and mine-clearing equipment owing to the projected completion of the acquisition of replacement equipment during the 2012/13 financial period.

35. The above reductions in requirements are partially offset by increased requirements for facilities and infrastructure ($32,300, or 0.5 per cent), and for information technology ($101,600, or 16.1 per cent), primarily attributable to increased requirements for information technology services, owing to the provision of first, second and third level support and upgrade and update of software systems and applications (see A/67/705, para. 45).

Ground transportation

36. The Advisory Committee recalls that it had requested UNDOF to provide information on the review of vehicle utilization in the context of the budget proposal for the 2013/14 financial period, including justification for proposed holdings in excess of the standard ratios (see A/66/718/Add.10, para. 35), which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly. From the supplemental information provided to it, the Committee notes that for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, during which 48 international personnel are proposed, it is planned that 17 light vehicles will be distributed among international staff, compared to 24 light vehicles distributed among international staff in the 2012/13 financial period. The proposed budget reflects the reduction of the vehicle fleet by 41 vehicles overall, from a total of

238 in the current period to a total of 197 in the 2013/14 financial period, equivalent to 17 per cent of vehicle holdings.

37. Nonetheless, the Advisory Committee notes that the vehicle holdings of UNDOF in the proposed budget for the 2013/14 financial period continue to exceed the standard ratios. In section V.B of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/705), it is indicated that, at the time of the preparation of the budget submission, UNDOF was temporarily exceeding standard vehicle ratios in the light of the fragile security situation, which required international staff and military personnel to work in three separate locations that are remote from each other and that may be rendered inaccessible owing to restrictions on movements. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the established ratios for vehicles were exceeded in UNDOF owing to (a) the need to provide the staff of the Office of the Force Commander and the Security and Safety Section with individual vehicles because the distinct nature of their individual duties does not allow them to share vehicles; (b) the requirement for the staff of the Integrated Support Service to carry tools and equipment to perform technical functions at the various positions in the area of separation; and (c) the need to provide additional buses for the transportation of national staff, because the majority of national staff members live in different suburbs of Damascus and the surrounding villages, which limits the capacity to share vehicles. It was indicated to the Committee, upon enquiry, that four VIP vehicles are assigned to the senior management of the Force, comprising the Head of Mission and the Chief of Mission Support, not for personal use, but rather to perform mandated activities. The Committee was also informed that the number of vehicles assigned to administrative and military staff were below the established ratios because their duties are largely confined to Force headquarters, which facilitates the sharing of vehicles.

38. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the measures taken by the Force to reduce the level of vehicle holdings. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to further review the level of vehicle holdings in UNDOF, including, if applicable, justification for holdings in excess of the standard ratios, and to report thereon in the context of the proposed budget for the 2014/15 financial period.**

Information technology

39. The Advisory Committee recalls that it had requested UNDOF to further review its holdings of computers (see A/66/718/Add.10, para. 36). In section V.B of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/705), it is indicated that UNDOF is undertaking a review of information technology holdings based on its operational requirements. From the supplementary information provided to it, the Advisory Committee notes that the provision for the acquisition of information technology equipment for the 2013/14 financial period reflects an increase of $3,500, or 1.8 per cent, compared to the resources for the 2012/13 financial period. The Committee further notes that projected holdings of computers (desktop, laptop, and netbook computers) in the 2013/14 financial period amount to 480 devices, including 185 devices that are reserved for other purposes, such as training; telephone billing; providing Internet connectivity to contingents; programming servers, radios and other equipment; CarLog; or as spares.

40. The proposed budget reflects the distribution of 295 computing devices to UNDOF personnel in the 2013/14 financial period, which is equal to the number in

the current period, while the number of such equipment reserved for other purposes decreases from 200 to 185 in the 2013/14 financial period. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Force estimates that it will replace 113 computing devices in the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, and that an additional 15 computing devices will be written off. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that further efficiencies may be identified in the use of computing devices, and looks forward to the results of the review of computer holdings in UNDOF.**

Training

41. Provision is made in the amount of $300,600 for training activities during the 2013/14 financial period, consisting of $230,300 for training travel and $49,800 for training fees, supplies and services (see A/67/705, paras. 33-35). Paragraph 34 of the report provides information on the planned number of training participants both for internal and external courses and the courses to be carried out within UNDOF itself. The Advisory Committee notes that it is planned that international staff will participate in training courses outside the mission area on 42 occasions during the financial period. The Committee further notes that under the results-based-budgeting frameworks in the performance report, the output for training under security was exceeded (see A/67/589), which is attributed to the implementation of a policy that requires mission-specific training and a minimum of five hours of annual security training per person.

42. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the policy on the requirement of five hours of annual training in security per staff member is specific to UNDOF and is distinct from the Secretary-General's bulletin on learning and development policy (ST/SGB/2009/9), which refers to a minimum target of five days for professional development annually. Owing to the security situation, the Force Commander requires that all staff should attend a one-hour training session, on an annual basis, in each of the following five areas: (1) general security; (2) nuclear, biological and chemical protection; (3) shelter alarms and camp protection; (4) convoy movement procedures; and (5) fire safety. Since these training sessions are provided internally by military personnel and security staff, there are no direct financial implications other than the training time spent by the staff. The Committee notes from the information provided to it that the proposed budget provides training for 165 participants in respect of the 48 proposed international personnel.

43. In section V.B of the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/705), it is indicated that in the current period UNDOF will maximize the number of participants in internal courses within the same level of training resources and that e-learning systems have been put in place in the areas of security, integrity, human resources management and IPSAS. The Advisory Committee recalls paragraph 22 of General Assembly resolution 66/246, in which the Assembly stressed that the largest possible share of resources provided for training purposes should be directed towards the preparation and delivery of training, and that ancillary costs, including associated travel, should be minimized. **The Committee reiterates its position that travel for training should be kept under close review and limited to the extent possible (see A/65/743, para. 135).**

44. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs.** The Committee comments further on

issues pertaining to operational costs, including equipment ratios, in its report on cross-cutting issues in peacekeeping operations (A/67/780).

4. Other matters

Regional mission cooperation

45. It is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General that UNDOF will continue to foster close cooperation with the other field missions in the region, with periodic meetings planned with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (A/67/705, para. 16). The Force will continue to rely on the shared support from UNIFIL for some of its logistical requirements, including its participation in the regional communications and information technology services initiative, which is intended to achieve economies of scale in the provision of communications and information technology services for UNDOF, UNIFIL, UNTSO and UNFICYP (A/67/705, para. 17). The Advisory Committee was informed that the Force could benefit from the establishment of a regional service centre, especially in view of the security situation prevailing in the mission area. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that UNDOF is currently facing disruptions in the delivery of financial and other administrative services, because international and national staff continue to face challenges in their work environment, including the daily commute of national staff from Damascus to UNDOF headquarters. The Committee was informed that a new regional service centre or an alternative back office support arrangement could mitigate risks to civilian personnel, while allowing continuous delivery of operational support from a centralized location. **The Committee encourages UNDOF to continue to explore means of improving the delivery of administrative and logistical services through closer cooperation with other United Nations peacekeeping operations in the region**.

Efficiency gains

46. It is indicated in the report that efficiency gains in the amount of $437,200 will be achieved in the 2013/14 period in the areas of commercial communications, owing to the utilization of terrestrial leased line fibre-optic circuits in commercial communications networks; repair and maintenance for vehicles, owing to the replacement of the fleet in recent financial periods; spare parts for vehicles, owing to more stringent management of inventory; generator fuel, through the connection of additional positions to the local power grid and improved insulation of facilities; and vehicle fuel, through the stringent management of vehicle utilization (A/67/705, para. 29). **The Advisory Committee notes that the magnitude of reductions in expenditure under operational costs projected by the Force in the current financial period may be indicative of further opportunities for achieving savings through efficiency measures, and recommends that the General Assembly request UNDOF to identify further such measures in the context of the 2014/15 budget submission (see para. 13 above)**.

V. Conclusion

47. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 are indicated in paragraph 33 of the performance report (A/67/589). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of $2,282,800 for the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, as well as other income/adjustments in the amount of $586,500, for the period ended 30 June 2012, be credited to Member States.**

48. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of UNDOF for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 are indicated in paragraph 48 of the proposed budget (A/67/705). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate an amount of $47,356,500 for the maintenance of UNDOF for the 12-month period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the mission beyond 30 June 2013.**